

William Dunbar to Thomas Jefferson, January 5, 1803, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

William Dunbar to Thomas Jefferson

Natchez 5th. January 1803

Dear Sir

A Series of bad health which has endured above twelve months has withdrawn much of my attention from Philosfic objects, a favorable change having lately taken place, I perceive with Satisfaction that my Mind & body are both recovering their former tone, and now again enjoy the pleasing prospect of dedicating my leisure hours to my favorite amusements, which however must for a time be Suspended, in consequence of a Call (which I knew not how to refuse) to the Infant Legislature of this Territory.

I have now the pleasure to enclose a letter addressed to me from a french Gentleman of considerable merit and talents; he acts in the Capacity of Civil Commandant over the Opelousas Country to the West of the Mississippi: his letter contains some particularities of his Country and is accompanied by two pretty full vocabularies of the tongues of two indian nations of that country to which is added a Sketch of the religion or Superstition of those people; which I hope may afford you and the Society some Small entertainment. From several other quarters I have used some efforts to draw Similar information but am hitherto disappointed. Should you be of opinion that Mr. Duralde merits the distinction of an honorary Member of your Society, I have no doubt that Such mark of your approbation will operate as a strong incentive for this Gentleman to exercise his talents in promoting the views of the Society.

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My Sketch of a history of the Mississippi has been long delayed from the cause above assigned, but shall be prepared and forwarded as soon as it can be completed.

I have lately been honored by a letter from Sir Joseph Banks with an Extract from the transactions of the Royal Society on the

subject of stones supposed to have fallen from the Clouds. I do not recollect to have heard of any such phenomenon having been observed upon the continent of America.

By a letter with which I was favored from my much esteemed friend Mrs. Trist by her Son lately arrived. She Says that you had informed her, it was my intention to remove shortly from this Country; I beg leave to remove this impression. Since the Country has been united to the American federation I have never ceased to consider it as my own Country, which I hope never to be under the necessity of abandoning.

With high consideration, I remain, Your most Obedient Servant,

William Dunbar

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